

**SPEECH OF THE HON'BLE GOVERNOR FOR 21<sup>st</sup>  
CONVOCATION OF ASSAM AGRICULTURAL  
UNIVERSITY ON 4<sup>th</sup> MAY, 2019**

Distinguished Special Guest Hon'ble Chief Minister of Assam Sri Sarbananda Sonowal ji; Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture, Assam Sri Atul Borah ji, , Vice Chancellor of Assam Agricultural University Dr K. M. Bujarbaruah ji, distinguished members of Board of Management and Academic Council of the University; Recipients of Doctor of Science degree (*Honoris Causa*), President, National Academy of Agricultural Science and former Secretary, DARE, GoI and Director General, Indian Council of Agricultural Research Dr. Panjab Singh ji, Noted Agripreneur Mr. Dhruba Sarma ji, Recipients of Graduate and Post Graduate Degrees; Distinguished guests; Faculty members, staff and students of the University; friends from media, ladies and gentlemen.

I consider it a great privilege to be presiding over the 21<sup>st</sup> Convocation of Assam Agricultural University, a leading and excellent agricultural university of the country.

In the beginning, I offer my heartfelt congratulations to all the graduating students who are receiving their well

deserved degrees and awards today. I also complement the teachers who had nurtured, groomed and prepared these graduates with required competitiveness and skills of the 21<sup>st</sup> century to enable them to transform our agriculture in to a lucrative and sought after livelihood profession.

Friends, we boast of our bio-resources but have not yet been able to fully capitalize on these resources to convert them into bio-economy and thus bring economic security to our farmers and other stakeholders engaged in the sector. I am happy to learn that, technology providers like Assam Agricultural University is revisiting such crucial issues through their state-of-the-art technologies to address the emerging and upcoming challenges confronting the sector today and tomorrow. I am happy to learn that bio-nano technological researches on these bio-resources have been taken up in the university including prospecting of acid tolerant genes from soil microbes.

Assam's economy is mainly agrarian and to improve the overall agricultural development in the state, shifting of focus from rice centric to rice based multi-cropping system needs to be practiced extensively. Extensions of research activities to address the emerging issues and skill up-gradation of our farmers have to be strengthened. Scientific soil test based-land



use planning would definitely ensure to double the farm income of our marginal farmers. I acknowledge the sincere efforts of our scientists and officers towards doubling the farmers' income by 2022. I appreciate your endeavour in achieving this common mission.

Friends, to excel the agriculture sector with much greater speed and velocity, the onus lies with the agriculturists including the students who are receiving the degrees today as they will also become the ambassadors of this growth momentum. I believe that "Youths should be job creators rather than job seekers". Sector like agriculture has immense potential of creating jobs and youths should take the advantage and play the role of a catalyst to create jobs. I am sure that the knowledge and experience that you have garnered from this premier institute, you will go a long way to empower you to guide the agriculture sector in right direction.

My dear students, please remember that the smile of the poor rests on your sincerity, commitments and your technological and advisory services. I, therefore, call upon you to take your job with utmost dedication.

Friends, this is my third visit to Assam Agricultural University. I have seen the teaching, research and extension services of this university and I am really impressed. I am told that in the last 7 - 8 years, the university has recorded enviable

growth in all spheres right from teaching, research, extension services, infrastructure and human resource development and I have full confidence in the dynamic leadership of the Vice Chancellor and his team which has brought about these positive changes to benefit the farming community of the state which is 68 per cent of its total population. It is learnt that there was a time when convocations of this University were held after long gaps, sometimes as long as 8-9 years. However, situation has changed now and under the leadership of the present functionary convocations are being held regularly once in two years.

Our great saint Swami Vivekananda once said "*My Faith is in the Younger Generation, the Modern Generation, out of them will come my workers. They will work out the whole problem, like Lions*". Dear students, I am hopeful that through your inner wisdom, enthusiasm and unbridled energy, you will definitely succeed to solve the vulnerabilities of our agricultural sector.

Friends, Indian Agriculture is plagued by several problems. A few challenges before the agricultural scientists are quality food, food safety, food security, nutritional security, water quality and quantity, bio-energy, stress vulnerability, climate change, community economic development, etc. But I am sure with the kind of the proven



capabilities of our scientists no problems are far from solutions.

Dear students, as you all know that to increase the long term soil fertility, control of pests and diseases without harming our environment is the only option. I, therefore, urge upon the teachers, scientists and research scholars to develop path finding packages for organic cultivation. In this context, first, identify zero chemical input applying areas state-wise, assess soil and water quality, apply organic packages developed by your institute and invite certifying agencies for certifying the products.

Friends, when India talks about Organic agriculture, it looks towards the North Eastern Hill Region first because the region as a whole has remained untouched by chemo-centric agricultural practices. This great scope needs to be explored and exploited in a systematic way by establishing an Organic University in the region especially in a centrally placed location like the state of Assam.

Friends, it has been observed that many youths from rural areas do not take agriculture as their profession and search for blue coloured job in urban areas. To stop this “*Agro-brain-drain*”, massive skill development activities for rural youths is a must for helping them improve their confidence. I am happy to learn that the University is all set to start its Agri-incubation

centre to train our people on Agri-start up venture. I would call upon you all to take full advantage of this facility.

Flood in Assam is a familiar and known phenomenon occurring with more severity from the last great earthquake of 1950. Mitigation of flood menace so as to counter environmental degradation and farmers' distress caused by it is a big challenge before us. Soil erosion perpetrated by recurrent floods have cascading effect on soil health. Appropriate strategies and its implementation in mission mode by all the departments responsible for managing this havoc is to be firmed up. Moreover, empowering the state agriculturally to respond more positively so as to increase food production of the state is the need of hour. I am happy to learn that Assam Agricultural University is already working in this line by developing a number of flood tolerant as well as flood escaping varieties.

The issue of less and lesser amount of water availability to the water thirsty sectors including the domestic sector is ringing the alarm bell for an impending crisis like situation. Per capita water availability in the country has come down by 70 per cent in last 64 years and ground water is also over exploited. The fresh water availability is dwindling and major proportion of it is contaminated. Therefore, to achieve targeted food production and agricultural growth from declining



availability of water, research towards its efficient and optimal utilization is the need of the hour. Water availability needs to be converted into accessibility through technological options and policy support.

Occurrence of drought due to erratic rainfall behaviour is another issue of concern. The extent of loss of crop production due to drought cannot be underestimated and it leaves an impact on the economy of the farming community. It is heartening to know that Assam Agricultural University has started working in the direction of developing drought tolerant lines of paddy using its genetic resources.

Another issue of concern is that Indian Institutions of Higher Learning are not being able to attract international ranking. In this competitive world, our education system needs to conform to global standards demanding the requirement of 21<sup>st</sup> century talents together with meeting the international ranking norms. For this to happen, the governance systems in the universities and institutions need to go through thorough reform process.

I am happy that Assam Agricultural University under the guidance of Dr. Bujarbaruah has the state-of-the-art facilities to compete globally, and for that reason the university has a number of joint international collaborative programs with foreign countries like USA, U.K, Australia, Italy, Spain,

Germany, Finland, Greece, Kenya, Nepal *etc.* I am told that 20 students from 10 countries are now pursuing their studies in this university. The facilities, the ambience *etc.* need to be further scaled up so as to attract more international students.

While adopting modern agricultural technology, we should not at the same time ignore the immense potential of our local seeds. We have therefore to take a solid program to preserve and utilize them in our breeding and development agenda.

Dear students, we all know that barometer of performance of any institution depends largely upon the quality of outputs it provides to the end users. Similarly, the performances of Agricultural Universities are governed by the quality of technologies percolating down to farm sector for improving the overall livelihood security of farm families. I hope that the committed and industrious attitude of this university community would revolutionise the farm sector of the state.

Dear students, as this university is counted amongst the leading agricultural universities you should feel proud to have been enrolled in Assam Agricultural University and to have eventually received the coveted degrees. I am glad that with the coordinated efforts of the students, teachers, staff and administration, the university could bag the prestigious Sardar



*Ballabh Bhai Patel Outstanding ICAR Institute Award* besides earning several other laurels in recent times. I am optimistic that with the proven leadership of Dr Bujarbaruah and his support team, the university will continue to scale the height of excellence.

I congratulate Dr. Panjab Singh, D.G., ICAR and also Sri Dhruba Sarma, noted Agripreneur for being awarded with the prestigious Doctor of Science degree (*Honoris Causa*).

With these words, I once again congratulate the recipients of degrees and awards and extend my best wishes to each member of Assam Agricultural University for continuing your impressive journey to achieve many breakthroughs.

**Thank You all**

**JAI HIND**